

Wanted: A Government for Alaska

By Atherton Brownell

IT has long been foreshadowed that at the present session of Congress a demand would be made by the people of Alaska for legislation that would give to them the same measure of self-government that is accorded to our Territories. It became known from President Taft's Seattle speech in September last that such a proposition would not receive Executive approval, and later, in his Message to Congress, the President indicated his attitude in no equivocal words.

He urges legislation to provide for the appointment by the President of a Governor and also of an Executive Council for Alaska, the members of which shall, during their term of office, reside in the Territory, and which shall have legislative powers sufficient to enable it to give to the Territory local laws adapted to its present growth. "I strongly deprecate legislation," he says, "looking to the election of a Territorial Legislature in that vast district. The lack of permanence of residence of a large part of the present population, and the small number of people who either permanently or temporarily reside in the district as compared with its vast expanse and the variety of the inter-

ests that have to be subserved, make it altogether unfitting, in my judgment, to provide for a popular election of a legislative body. The present system is not adequate and does not furnish the character of local control that ought to be there. The only compromise, it seems to me, which may give needed local legislation and secure a conservative government is the one I propose."

It is hardly a matter of surprise that President Taft should suggest as the basis of a civil government in an undeveloped territory a form so nearly similar to that established by himself in the Philippine Islands, and this similarity may not inconceivably lead to considerable discussion.

One point that may be brought to the front is that in our somewhat hectic acquirement of non-contiguous territory we have set up almost as many forms of government as we have lands to govern. Alaska at present has no adequate and complete form of government, its affairs being administered by a Governor appointed from Washington. It has an executive and a judiciary, but no legislative branch of government. Porto Rico, the Panama Canal Zone, and Guam are

each governed solely by a Governor appointed from Washington. Hawaii has a full Territorial form of government, while the Philippines are governed by a resident Commission which exercises all of the executive functions as well as those legislative functions that belong to the upper house in a State form of government. It is this latter form that President Taft has suggested as best meeting the present needs of Alaska, and to which opposition has already developed, largely on the ground that a form of government designed for and suited to an incompetent people of Asiatic origin unused to our forms would not be satisfactory for people of our own kind and from our own stock.

This radical difference between the two countries, Alaska and the Philippines, is admittedly true. It is, however, superficial, since there are fundamental elements of similarity that appeal to one so experienced in the work of constructive government building as President Taft. In both cases we have a vast territory of untold richness almost wholly lacking in development, but capable, under a wise and broad policy of exploitation, of becoming of immense value, not only as an asset to this country, but to its own people. The cases differ in that in the Philippines we have a great native population who are looked upon as wards of the Government, and for whose future generations their lands are to be conserved and developed, while the American population is hardly to be considered. In Alaska we have a land that is equally rich, but lying nearer our own borders, and in which the native population is a negligible quantity. It demands conservation and development, not for future generations of natives, but for the incoming population of American farmers, miners, and industrial settlers, the vanguard of which is already upon the ground.

President Taft's chief point in favor of a commission as opposed to a Territorial form of government at the present moment is that this present population is too sparse and its interests too widely diversified over an immense stretch of territory to make any general development plan undertaken by the people themselves adequate to the broadest considera-

tion of policies affecting the development of the Territory as a whole and in the best interests of that population which is already packing its boxes preparatory to moving in. This is another condition that to a degree parallels the situation in the Philippines, where the industrial, political, social, and religious interests of the various parts of the archipelago are—while not necessarily foreign—unknown to each other.

To get a clear and fair idea of the Alaskan situation it is only necessary to superimpose the map of that Territory upon the map of the United States. If Mount St. Elias, the southernmost point of the direct boundary line running north to the Arctic, be placed over Cairo, Illinois, the northeastern point of Alaska will be found to coincide with Marquette, Michigan; Point Barrow will coincide with the northern boundary of Michigan; Cape Romanoff, which is the extreme western point of the Alaskan mainland, will be over Denver, Colorado. This has to do only with the central portion of Alaska, for, under other circumstances, southeastern Alaska will be found to stretch across Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia to Savannah, while the western sweep of the Aleutian Islands extends through Oklahoma and Texas, touching El Paso, and to Santa Barbara on the Pacific Coast. Within the sweep of territory in the United States are over a score of cities of more than fifty thousand population, each closely connected with the others by ties of steel and mutual interest, while between them lie thickly populated areas binding the whole into one homogeneous mass. Had a proposition ever been made to put this territory under a single Territorial or State form of government, it would have been considered more futile than our original attempt to keep the great Northwest Territory, in its primitive days, under a single form of government.

In Alaska, therefore, we have a territory which, roughly speaking, covers an area equivalent to that comprised in the States from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the junction of the Missouri and the Mississippi to our northern boundary, and in which we have a population of less than forty thousand

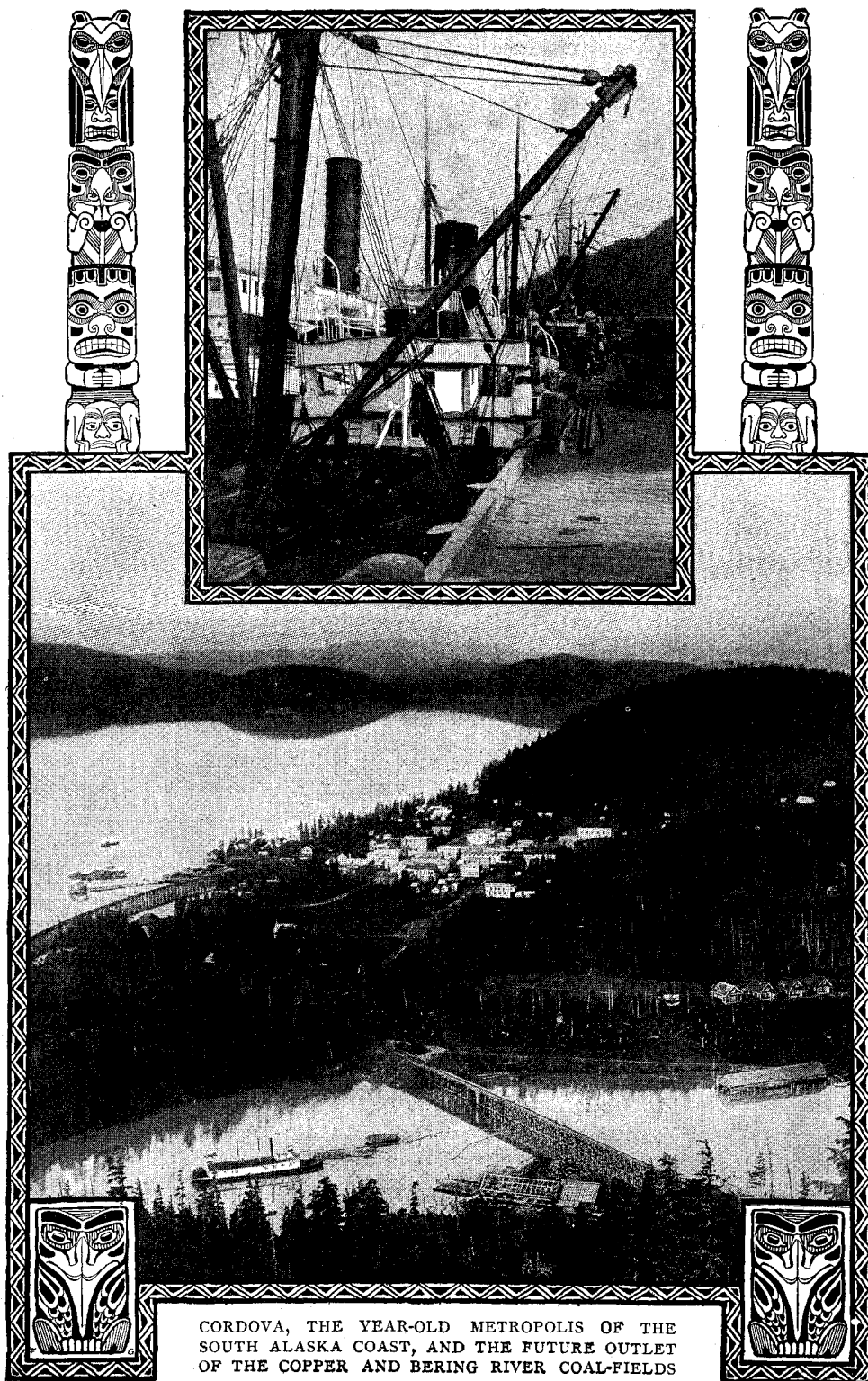
people located in a dozen small cities, ranging from twelve hundred to five thousand, and separated from one another by days of weary travel, with differing and sometimes conflicting interests, thereby forbidding a common opinion and common action on the issues that are certain to arise. There is no overlapping of interests from one community to the next, nor even a point at which they come in contact. Each came into being for some special local need of development, and between them lie great wastes of country awaiting the coming of the settler who will develop them, and by that development bind the whole together into one homogeneous mass, the material for half a dozen States.

Southern Alaska has its fisheries and its forests, with deep-water facilities for shipping and mail service the year around, together with its considerable quartz mining interests. Here, on the southern coast, are also the immense coal deposits awaiting development, and also the rich copper deposits of the Kotsina-Chitina region, which have forced the beginning of railway construction. Deep in the interior, in the Tanana Valley, the center of which is Fairbanks, and which seems destined to be the most permanently prosperous section of Alaska, lies a great agricultural region, which must, however, for many years be practically inaccessible during the winter, while in the short summer the farmer's attention will be confined to his crops. At sub-arctic Nome and in the valleys of the north lie great placer mines. Under these circumstances, for the representatives of one section to legislate for the interests of others would be almost as difficult—even though they could physically get together—as for the Mohammedan Moro of Zamboanga to find a common thought or tongue with the Christian Tagalog of Manila in the Philippine Islands. Even to select a Territorial capital, where a legislature could hold its sessions, would be a perplexity. The travel routes of Nome, Cordova, and Skagway, for instance, are entirely different, and it is nearly three thousand miles by any natural route from Nome to Ketchikan. As a matter of fact, if one were to choose the most accessible capital for Alaska as it is

to-day, Seattle, which is not in Alaska at all, would be the most feasible, since it is the one place where all Alaskans can most easily meet. Geographically because it is the center, and logically because of its size and importance, Fairbanks would have the strongest claim, but the difficulty of access as a common point from most of the other cities would cause a grave perplexity.

In spite of all these difficulties of the present, Alaskans already resent the suggestion of a resident commission as the governing power, partly because of the comparison with the semi-civilized Philippines, but more largely, perhaps, because the Territory has already suffered much through an incompetent form of "carpet-bag" government. If, therefore, the Philippine Commission is cited as an example, it is because that body more nearly approaches the model for a commission form of government than any we have yet developed. Composed of men having no local or sectional interests who have become residents of the country, and supplemented by some who are natives, it has proved that, under the circumstances causing its creation, it has been able to pursue a broader policy of development, more exactly suited to the needs of the country as a whole, and more in harmony with Washington and National legislation, than any native legislature could possibly have accomplished. Not being by birth or personal interest too close to sectional details and prejudices, it has been able to maintain a perspective view of the needs of the country as a whole, and, while it is in a formative state, so to broaden the policy as to comprehend the greatest good for all. It has made mistakes and profited by them, and much of the experimental work in the development of practically new territory would have a direct bearing in the development of the wonderful resources of Alaska.

The Philippine Commission is composed of seven members, five of whom are Americans selected by the President and two of whom are natives similarly appointed. These seven were originally the lawmaking as well as the executive branches of government, and under them the judiciary was selected. As a whole, the Commission acted as the legislative



CORDOVA, THE YEAR-OLD METROPOLIS OF THE
SOUTH ALASKA COAST, AND THE FUTURE OUTLET
OF THE COPPER AND BERING RIVER COAL-FIELDS

branch, and each member then became the head of one of the several executive departments. The native members were looked to for close advice and direction as to local and native conditions and needs, while the entire Commission, with its general view of the conditions and its great flexibility, established the various branches of public work modeled upon our own, but adapted to local conditions. Thus it installed all the machinery of government as experts and not as amateurs, and, as time has gone on, the native population has now been given the General Assembly, or lower house, in the legislative branch, with the power of initiative, while the Commission still remains as the upper house and executive branch.

Alaskan conditions suggest a slight variation in the matter of construction of the Commission. If seven be considered the best number to provide the Commission with the varied expert knowledge and still keep the body within the limits of flexibility, three of these might properly be Alaskans, each to be chosen from a different district, since there are three general divisions of the Territory whose interests and needs differ widely. Furthermore, since the present population is of a character so different from that of the people of the Philippines and fully capable of exercising the power of the franchise, there seems to be no reason why in the case of Alaska these native commissioners should not be chosen by the people at a popular election. The other four might properly be by Executive appointment and become residents of Alaska. The work to be done by the Commission would, to a large extent, influence the appointment of men with the special training, knowledge, and experience to fit them to meet the conditions that are to be confronted. Such a Commission would give local self-government, far removed from the criticism of Washington control and without the suggestion of carpetbagging that is abhorrent to Alaskans. To this might be added a Territorial Delegate in Congress with power to vote.

The immediate future of Alaska is in the development of its agricultural and mineral resources; its ultimate destiny is as a commercial territory; and as between the two periods, though linked with both,

is the necessary development of transportation facilities. The demand of Alaska for government is therefore that it be primarily of a business nature. In the Philippines the Commission had to meet such a question in the very beginning. Without adequate transportation from the interior of the several islands to their sea-coasts, and also inter-insular transportation by water, there could be no development of the resources. Yet such transportation could not be profitable until development had reached a commercial stage. Only a closely knit Commission of sane men, well versed in the well-established principles of economics, could have met a question of such a nature and, in the absence of private capital willing to undertake the task, make it a part of the work of government.

In Alaska a similar question presents itself. The Territory cannot develop without adequate transportation to and from it. Its interior cannot develop without adequate transportation to the seacoast, and the difficulties of railway building here are, for many reasons, sufficient to give pause to the hardest government. Because of the rich mining development, present and prospective, private capital is here undertaking the task, which is the reverse of the condition that exists in the Philippines and one that calls for careful consideration. This and a kindred question demand the broadest and most conservative handling. There is a local feeling that Alaska may be given over to "the corporations." As between giving to corporate interests a mortgage—a death pledge—upon the future of Alaska, and so throttling them that neither they nor the people by unorganized individual effort can develop these resources, there is a safe middle ground that must be occupied, and the question thus presented is again similar to that which confronted the Philippine Commission. The wealth of the Philippines attracted the greed of great aggregations of capital, which doubtless would exploit that wealth solely for their own desires and regardless of the future welfare of the people. Here the attempt was made to prevent the everlasting mortgaging of the future by the adoption of stringent and drastic land laws which effectually prevented their occupation by capitalists, but which, by the same token,

have caused them to lie idle and undeveloped while the natives starved. This form of conservation for future generations presupposed the ability of the present generation to live on nothing long enough to bring the next into being. The actual operation of these laws has brought students of the Philippine Government, including President Taft, to the belief that real development means to take advantage of the benefits to be derived from corporate organization, while at the same time checking undue greed. The land laws of the Philippines are to be amended along this line of thought, and one of the problems that will confront an Alaskan Commission is along the same line.

This same problem is one that, in other phases, confronts the entire country in the matter of the proper limitations that shall be set to the carrying out of our conservation policy. There is a growing feeling that the true purposes of conservation are not being fulfilled by the absolute withdrawal of lands for entry and settlement in order to prevent their occupation by greedy capital; but that the real purpose of conservation is the proper use and economical development of our resources. Between conservation that means idleness and the waste that foreshadows want there is a policy the note of which is sounded in the annual report of Secretary of the Interior Ballinger where he suggests the classification and segregation of public lands according to their greatest apparent use. This is the salient point, perhaps, of the Administration's view of the public domain, namely, its use as opposed to its abuse and neglect.

Alaska furnishes one of the present examples of the latter in its coal-fields. Mr. Alfred H. Brooks, of the United States Geological Survey, is authority for the statement that the coal deposits on the southern coast of Alaska are greater in extent than the coal-fields of Pennsylvania. The Pacific coast is practically without coal otherwise. The United States Navy Department imports its coal largely from Wales for use in ships on the Pacific, and it pays therefor as high a price as \$12 to \$14 per ton. Lying untouched in Alaska are coal-fields which, if operated, could produce coal at perhaps \$2 per ton, thereby supplying not only the

manufacturing plants of the Pacific coast with their fuel, but also providing the navy with coal at one-sixth the cost, as well as creating a supply of our own upon which we could draw for National defense in case of need, instead of compelling us to go to foreign nations for a contraband of war which, even could it be obtained, would then have to be transported over great exposed distances in foreign bottoms.

Our navy in the Pacific burns approximately four hundred thousand tons of coal annually, most of which comes from Wales, although a small amount comes around Cape Horn from Pennsylvania. The cost runs from \$7 to \$14 per ton at the Mare Island Navy-Yard, whereas with the Alaskan coal-fields open and in operation, with adequate railway transportation, we would have our own supply independently of any other nation and at an annual Government saving of approximately \$4,000,000 per annum. This saving in one year would be sufficient to equip the mines with the necessary machinery to produce two million tons per year. If the coal-fields of Alaska were to be held undeveloped for fifty years, as has been suggested, to provide for the future, the United States navy alone would have wasted \$200,000,000.

As the coal land situation in Alaska is a matter of keen public interest at this time, a word on this subject may add to a clearer understanding. In 1900 the coal land law of the United States was extended to Alaska. That proved ineffectual because the laws permitted the entry of surveyed lands only, and there were no public surveys in Alaska. In 1904 a new law was passed permitting the location of unsurveyed coal lands by taking possession and marking boundaries. Under that act some thirty thousand acres of coal land were located in what is known as the Bering River coal-field, about ten thousand acres were located in what is known as the Matanuska coal-field, and perhaps two thousand acres located in the Fairbanks district, all in 160-acre sections or tracts. The language of the act provides that no entries shall be made except for the individual benefit of the locator, and not directly or indirectly for the benefit of any other person or com-

pany nor with the intention of later selling or combining with others for more economical working or obtaining capital for equipment. Under this ruling some thirty and odd entries were suspended in 1906 for fraud. Because of the belief that corporate interests were seeking the development of these lands all were withdrawn from entry.

Practically the only corporate interests in Alaska to-day on a large scale are those which exist under the so-called Morgan-Guggenheim syndicate. Its railway, the Copper River and Northwestern, is being driven from tidewater on Prince William Sound northward to tap the Bering River coal-fields, the Kotsina-Chitina copper region, and the gold-bearing and agricultural Tanana Valley in the interior plateau. This railway is the one assured enterprise of the kind under construction in Alaska, the supreme need of which territory is rail connection between tidewater and the mineral fields of the interior. It is being built at large expense without cost to the Government in either money or concessions of land, timber, or minerals. How great would have been the setback to the development of our own West if such conditions had been required of the first transcontinental lines may be imagined.

The one actual possession of the builders of this road, and that which gives them a practical reason for building it, is a single copper mine in the upper Chitina region. This is the somewhat celebrated Bonanza, certainly a remarkably valuable property, and—so far as exploration has gone—the richest of the dozen or more large prospects in an extensive and but little prospected area, which without the railway is almost inaccessible.

The Morgan-Guggenheim syndicate, in addition to being accused of owning all the copper in the Territory, is accused of clutching at all the coal lands. More particularly it is charged with having some sort of working agreement with the Cunningham interests, which have thirty-two claims in the Bering River fields, concerning the granting of patents on which there has recently been much discussion.

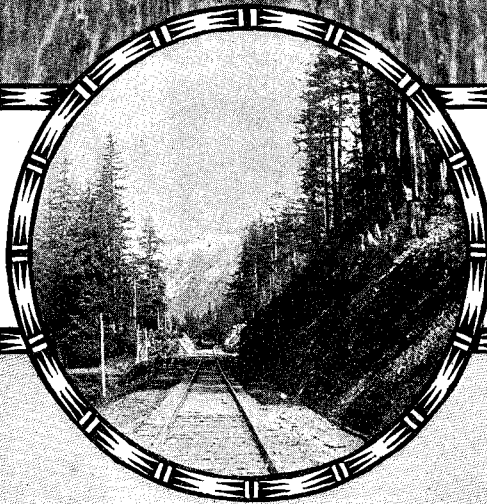
Unquestionably the belief that there is some connection between the builders of the railway and the Cunningham claimants is based upon the unreasonable

nature of the supposition that conservative capital would not build a railway through an isolated wilderness without some assurance of an adequate fuel supply. Even if this is true, what are the conditions?

The thirty-two Cunningham claims consist of 5,120 acres of land. There are in this one field alone 550 claims measuring 88,000 acres. In the Bering River and Matanuska fields together there are 900 claims of 160 acres each. To get at this coal for the operation of the mines there must be built more than fifty miles of railway, thereby opening up another inaccessible and important area, and terminal facilities for handling it must be provided, besides the incurring of the expense of large primary development. Yet these holdings would be less than six per cent of the area already located. And failing this resource, the railway must pay from \$12 to \$14 a ton to run engines through an uninhabited wilderness.

These facts are quoted merely as an instance of the popular misapprehension of conditions in Alaska and as illustrating the infinite possibilities of injustice and injury to the forces developing a pioneer country of especially forbidding aspect—*forbidding*, of course, because so largely unknown. To a degree this parallels the situation in the Philippines, except that in the latter case, because of the throttling nature of the laws, the Government itself has been forced to promote all railway construction and guarantee interest on the bonds. Private enterprise has refused to interest itself, and this is one of the lessons of the Philippines Commission.

One interesting example of the difference between individual license and corporate liberty is presented by the gold rushes into Alaska. In the beginning a great horde of unrestrained miners tore at the breast of Mother Earth and drew forth the gold that was easily reached. Wholly unrestrained either by law or a sense of obligation toward the land they were looting, the waste was enormous, and when they departed they left behind them nothing but great heaps of "tailings" and apparently worthless heaps of earth. The conservation of corporations is now turning this waste into wealth, establishing a permanent industry, a per-



THE UPPER PICTURE SHOWS A GRAIN-FIELD OF THE FERTILE TANANA VALLEY. THE MIDDLE PICTURE SHOWS THE LUMBER LAND ALONG THE COPPER RIVER. THE LOWER PICTURE SHOWS AN ALASKAN TRUCK-GARDEN

manent population, and that transportation which is opening and developing the country for the farmer and the industrial worker, who always follow the first unbridled rush.

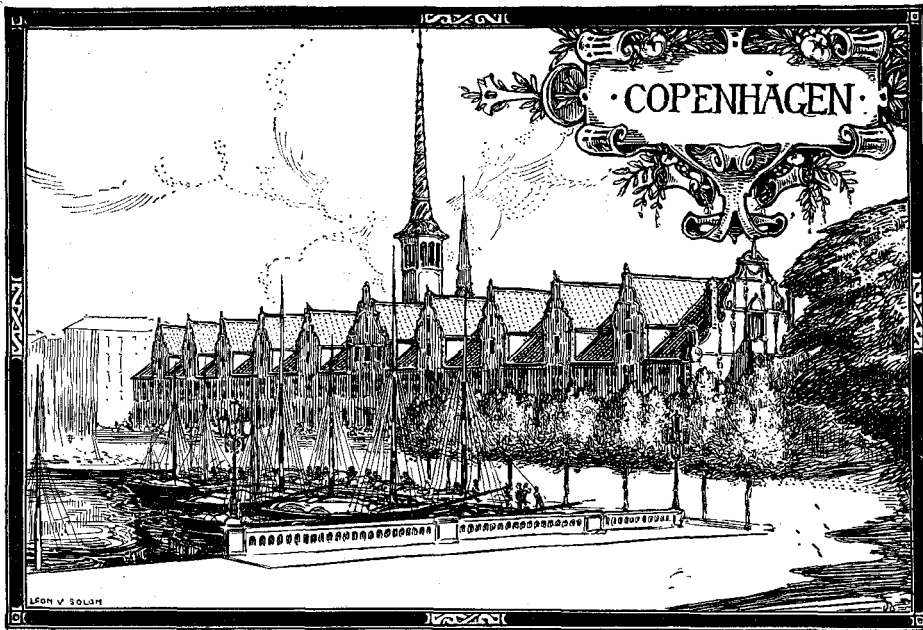
This indicates the great question that must be decided in working out the governmental policy for Alaska in its formative state, and it is one that cannot properly be met by a native legislature, which must necessarily be made up of people unused to the task of government and perhaps of demagogic tendencies, nor yet by an irresponsible commission that is not closely in touch with the Territory's needs. Less general in the economic principle involved, but no less general so far as the entire Territory of Alaska is concerned, are the other questions of policy and legislation which must be met in a manner free from sectional prejudice. This Commission will have to deal with the modification of legislation for the different parts of the country; to regulate the opening of saloons and govern the matter of licenses; to develop the educational system and control the opening of the schools in incorporate towns; to open roads promptly where needed on account of new mining development and to construct permanent roads when justified; to establish quickly the resources for law and order in new mining communities; to grant railway facilities under the varying terms of development as conditions justify; to have authority over inspection of river steamers. As it stands now, inspection technicalities perfectly proper elsewhere and certain laws of pilotage equipment and the like are applied without the slightest regard to their real value in Alaska, and other things of equal importance are neglected. All such details as whistle, gong, and signals, the location of pilot-houses, the equipment of life rafts, and the like need to be considered in view of the local conditions.

The mail contract is another matter particularly needing local authority. Remarkable diversity of seasons which require sometimes a pack-horse, sometimes a dogsledge, and sometimes a river steamer, in turn, ought to be a special reason for

leaving the contract to local authority. At present Washington advertises for bids for an extended rate of maximum weights of mail to be carried, and this must either be set far too high for normal needs or far too low for abnormal needs. The contractors find no elasticity, and the public sometimes gets all its mail and sometimes finds that tons of mail have been left undelivered at the coast. The Government pleads that it cannot afford to carry second and third class mail in winter, when expenses are so high, although the people of Alaska would be glad to pay whatever is necessary to haul all their mail to them. The American post-office has no provision for which extra rates can be charged in winter for exceptionally expensive service, but an Alaskan Commission could readily appropriate money for such a purpose.

Beyond these concrete examples there are many needs of the Territory in which, by all logic and precedent, the Federal Government should be deeply interested, such as river and harbor improvements and the proper lighting of the 5,000 miles of coast-line now traversed under great difficulties by treasure-laden ships.

Throughout Alaska may be found the feeling to-day that the physical needs of the Territory have not been sufficiently considered by Congress in the way of appropriations, in view of the great revenue it has turned into the National treasury. Alaskans are quite willing to bear the burden of what development it is proper for them to bear, or even more, but feel something of a sense of injustice that the wealth they have produced in part should be so completely devoted to other purposes and their own needs overlooked. A Territorial form of government, purely local in character, with its seat so far from Washington, would not necessarily attract the consideration of Congress. A Commission created by Congress might easily be expected to create a close tie between Washington and the Territorial capital, such certainly having been the case in the instance of the Philippine Commission, of which President Taft was the first head.



A Commonwealth Ruled by Farmers

The Third of Five Articles on Industrial Democracy in Europe

By Frederic C. Howe

With Drawings by Leon V. Solon

DENMARK is a farmer State. It has a farmer Parliament, a farmer Ministry, a farmer point of view. Its legislation is that of the farmer too.

Most countries are ruled by a class. It may be by a landed aristocracy, it may be by a commercial, oligarchy. And most people accept the rule of a class as the most natural thing in the world. In Denmark the people really rule, and they rule in the interest of a larger percentage of the people than in any country I know, unless it be in Switzerland. The Danish peasant is the direct antithesis of the English peasant, who wants to be ruled by a lord. The peasant in Denmark wants to be ruled by a peasant like himself. Nor does he intrust his Government to members from the cities, to the lawyers,

or to the large landowners. Denmark is suspicious of Copenhagen, its largest city. Denmark distrusts the lawyer, and the landed aristocracy is only permitted to protest. Copenhagen does not like the rule of the peasants. The permanent official seems to be ashamed of it, and the King employs himself busily in social and personal functions, with the most shadowy powers and with practically no influence on legislation.

The State of Denmark is a peasant democracy. Its ruling class is the small farmer possessing from forty to sixty acres of land, and with an outlook on life that is exclusively agricultural. The present Minister of Agriculture was a workman whose business was that of thatching roofs. Three or four other members of the